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AMERICAN IDEALS AND EDUCATION

By J. P. WYNNE

Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College

AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS are founded upon two fundamental principles; individual liberty and majority control. They have been acquired through religious persecutions, economic conflicts, political revolutions and foreign and civil wars. They have been firmly established in the hearts of the American people and have been expressed in the fundamental laws of our country. First, the growth of the spirit of individual liberty represents a characteristic phase of our national development from the earliest settlements until the present time. Second, the acceptance of the spirit of majority control represents the state of mind that has been the saving principle of our most vital interests in times of greatest national need. Third, the future influence of these American ideals depends upon the sympathy developed among our people in the co-operative performance of common tasks.

In regard to the first principle we have two sources of information: (1) the momentous decisions and conflicts expressing the popular mind on questions of public concern; (2) the documents of our State and Federal constitutions and the State and Federal laws passed by legislative enactments as provided for in these instruments. The love of personal liberty has influenced very largely every step in the growth of our country. From the earliest times until the present hour we have been jealous of our individual rights. Many of the early settlers accepted all the hardships of the seas and the almost insurmountable difficulties of a wild and savage land in order that they might escape some form of tyranny in their native countries. Only the name of Puritan, Quaker, Highland Scotch, Scotch-Irish, Moravian, Huguenot, is enough to make the hearts of many beat a little faster when they recall the noble blood that runs in their veins. We have always been jealous of our rights. The conflicts between the colonists and the colonial governors were the expression of the determination of our fathers to maintain every privilege that they had gained in this country or that Englishmen had gained anywhere at any time. The struggle of the free west with the aristocratic east from the colonial period until the Civil War was largely a question of personal rights. The Civil War grew out of the belief in the right of secession. The liberation of the slaves and the survival of the "indestructible union of the indestructible states" justify the struggle of those who believed in a perpetual union and the right of all men to be free. During the Revolution, Great Britain offered us a draw-back on tea according

to which Americans could have bought tea cheaper than the people of the British Isles.¹ But this offer was so made that had we bought the tea, we should have admitted the right of Great Britain to tax us as it saw fit. No lowering of the stamp tax or rebate on the price of tea could persuade the colonists to yield their right to decide upon their own system of taxation. In 1916 Germany gladly offered to prescribe certain vessels on which Americans might sail safe from all danger.² It was not the privilege of sailing safely that we demanded. We demanded the right to sail safely on any vessel we pleased. This was a right we had gained as a free people among free peoples. Were we to yield a single right to any country we should be compelled to endure further invasions. Never will our government or our people refuse to consider sacred and inviolable every right gained through the struggles of the generations of men who have preceded us. It is for this principle that the noblest of our sons in almost every generation during the past three centuries have given their lives on the field of battle. It was for the maintenance of this principle that fifty thousand of our boys were laid beneath the sod of France.

These are only representative activities of our people during every period of their history and stand as infallible testimony to their undying loyalty to the spirit of liberty. But to render the argument complete we must refer to the second source of evidence—our Federal and State constitutions, together with the great number of laws made in accordance with them. These documents are immortal monuments to the spirit of individual liberty.

The question of personal rights came up in the very making of the Federal constitution. Mighty intellectual battles were waged in the convention at Philadelphia in 1787 on the question of states' rights and personal liberty. This is shown by the debates in the convention and the great compromises found in the instrument itself. This question delayed the ratification convention of almost every state.⁴ The first ten amendments to the constitution are embodiments of this spirit. Examine the state constitutions and you will find in all of them a bill of rights—an enumeration of the citizens' primordial rights to liberty of person and security of prop-

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¹ Bassett. *A Short History of the United States*, pp. 161-176.

² New York Times. *General History*, Vol. IV, pp. 640-643, and Vol. VII, p. 21.

³ Fiske. *Critical Period in American History*, pp. 236-286.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 306-350.

contents of each New Testament writing are carefully analyzed, and the author has achieved a very clear and orderly arrangement of the materials. The Apostolic Letters are considered in detail, as are also the Catholic or General Letters.—E. W. K.

SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW. By John Dewey and Evelyn Dewey. E. P. Dutton and Company, N. Y. Pages, 316. Price, \$2.00.

This is not a text-book of education nor a discussion of new methods of teaching, nor is any attempt made in it to develop a complete theory of education or review any complete system of education. The book undertakes to show how the schools of yesterday, designed to meet the needs of yesterday, fail to meet the requirements of today. It is a description of some of the most useful and successful experimentations carried on in various parts of the country by able teachers. Some of these "experiment stations" are described in detail after they have been personally visited by the authors. The schools used for illustration were chosen because the authors already knew of them or because they were conveniently located, and as the authors stated in the introduction, do not represent all that is being done today to vitalize the school-life of children and to give greater freedom and an identification of the child's school-life with his environment and outlook. Attention is given to the part education must play in a democracy. It is one of the suggestive and valuable books that all teachers and school administrators should know thoroughly.—E. W. K.

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erty. These clauses are emphasized in importance by being placed either at the beginning or at the end of the instrument.⁵

The liberty of person and the security of property have been possessions dear to the heart and sacred in the sight of every true American from 1776 until the present hour. More than life have we loved them. For without them life would not be worth living. Sooner would we die of hunger, cold and fatigue, or perish in the conflict of bloody battle than surrender these fundamental requirements of the soul either for ourselves or our children.

But in our enthusiasm for our own rights it is easy to neglect the rights of others. There is another principle that necessity forces upon any society that continues progressive, wholesome and secure against class

interest, mob rule and a thousand other imperfections of our imperfect human nature. This is the principle of majority control. Every question not involving a moral issue should be compromised in the interest of the majority.

The compromise of a moral issue is never justified. Whenever individuals, groups or classes, have placed themselves in opposition to the great moral forces of the universe, whether among ancient or modern peoples, some punishment has been inflicted indirectly on humanity and a more severe one directly on those committing the offense. When we have worshipped Baal, Jehovah has deserted us. In making our Federal constitution we compromise the question of slavery. As a consequence, we suffered the severe pain and irreparable aftermath of one of the most destructive domestic wars known to human history. In the World War Germany sacrificed right on the altar of force. As a consequence that country brought unlimited suffering upon innocent peoples the world over, even upon unborn generations, and suffered the most inglorious military defeat since the Romans destroyed the city of the Carthaginians. We cannot afford to compromise a question of right. We have heard it said that honesty is the best policy. But no man is warranted in debating whether or not it would be the best policy for him to steal. It is best for the pupil not to cheat on examination. But he cannot afford to debate such a question. Certain fundamental moral principles have become firmly established in the hearts of civilized men the world over and he who contemplates their violation is turning his face in the direction of everlasting ruin.

All other questions should be compromised in the interest of harmony and of society as a whole. In the first place, this principle has become firmly established in our American institutions. It was the one saving principle of the convention of 1787. Brevity demands that I limit my discussion of this point very largely to the formation of our Federal constitution. In the constitution great compromises were written into permanent record. First the agreement as to the nature of congress, as to the manner of election and representation, is a splendid tribute to that real philosophic insight and wise statesmanship which avoids extremes and seeks right and justice in a mean between two ends. Two plans were offered for the establishment of our national legislature. First, the Virginia plan, offered by William Randolph, voiced the sentiments of the large states and those who believed in the Federal principle. Second, the New Jersey plan, offered by William Patterson, voiced the sentiments of the small states and those who believed in the states' rights principle. "According to the Virginia plan, the

⁵ Bryce. *The American Commonwealth*, Vol. I, pp. 437-443.

national legislature was to be composed of two houses, like the legislature of the several states. The members of the lower house should be chosen directly by the people; members of the upper house, or senate, should be elected by the lower house out of persons nominated by the state legislatures. In both the lower and the upper branches of this national legislature the votes were to be the votes of individuals, and no longer the votes of states, as in the Continental Congress."⁶ According to the New Jersey plan, there should be a Federal legislature, consisting of a single house, and an executive in the form of a Federal council to be chosen by Congress. The Federal legislature which it proposed was to represent states, and not individuals, and the states were to vote equally, without regard to population.⁷ The four most populous states—Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and North Carolina—favored the Virginia plan; and they succeeded in carrying South Carolina with them. Georgia, too, which, though weak at the moment, possessed considerable room for expansion, voted upon the same side. On the other hand, the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland, which were not only small in area, but were cut off from further expansion by their geographical situation, were not inclined to give up their equal vote in either branch of the national legislature. They supported the New Jersey Plan.⁸ When things were looking darkest, Oliver Ellsworth and Roger Sherman suggested a compromise. "Yes," said Franklin, "when a joiner wishes to fit two boards, he sometimes pares off a bit from both."⁹ The famous Connecticut compromise led the way to the arrangement which was ultimately adopted. The national principle was to prevail in the house of representatives, and the Federal principle in the Senate, and the principle of compromise was to lie at the very foundation of our government. Other compromises were made—compromises of state interests, class interests, individual prejudices—to meet the exigencies of the peculiar chain of circumstances faced by the fathers of the first great democratic nation at the hour of its birth. The power of Congress to pass bills by a simple majority and control the tariff, our great national capitol at Washington, and the many great states carved out of the western lands and now glorifying the Union—all constitute eternal monuments to the spirit of compromise to which great peoples of all times and places pay reverent homage.¹⁰

The compromise of individual interests in the interest of the majority is justified by the maxims of common sense. This ship of state is launched towards a distant shore. On its decks are men and women of all classes and distinctions. The safe arrival of every one of them depends upon the safe approach of the mighty liner to the harbor on the other side. In the midst of the perils of the deep, with the expectant watch of the enemy submarines, with the great message of the great civilizations of the generations that are behind to the generations that are before us in the distant future, surrounded by many other great ships of the convoy, the mighty liner plows the waves. The conduct of the sailors and soldiers of an American convoy during the Great War may be profitably observed here. Not one of the convoy will refuse through pride to wear the dull, unbecoming stripes of camouflage. Not one will use his size, strength, speed and efficiency to outstrip his neighbors in the race. Not a watchman will close his eyes while his companions sleep; the rain falls, the wind howls, and the billows roll. Many like the comforts of a smoke, but not a light is seen. From the topmost deck to the lowest hold the port-holes are closed. How pleasant would be one draught of the fresh air of nature! But days and weeks pass. They suffer for sleep that calms weary minds and bodies. They suffer for food that gives power for physical endurance. They suffer for the air of nature that revivifies sinking spirits. Just as the different vessels of the convoy and the different individuals suffer little discomforts for the safety of the whole, it is necessary that we forego some inconveniences if our civilization is to move steadily without interruption in the way indicated by the virtues of the men and the women that have piloted us through the shallows and storm-swept shores into the great expanse of the ocean. The safety of each of us is wrapped up with the safety of all of us. The security of the property of every individual depends upon the security of the property of every other individual. The freedom of life and limb of any of us cannot exist while the artificially forged manacles of poverty, ignorance and lack of opportunity bind the neck and wrist of any of the rest of us. We need more Christianity in this country and fewer tenets of church denominationalism. We need more statesmen and fewer politicians. We need fewer laborers and capitalists and more Americans. We need men and women who will sacrifice their little petty, insignificant, personal whims, class pride and class greed, and look at our institutions and our civilization in their true perspective.

(To be Concluded)

⁶ Fiske. *Critical Period of American History*, p. 236.

⁷ Fiske. *Critical Period in American History*, p. 45.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 244.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 250.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 236-286.